

# Patterns of Ministerial Careers Across Territorial Levels in Germany

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## 1. Introduction

The study of political careers across territorial levels is a fairly new field of research. This has two main reasons. The first reason is to be seen in the methodological nationalism (cf. Jeffery 2008, Jeffery/Wincott 2010) that has been prevailing for a long time in many fields of political science and in particular in career studies. Political careers were automatically seen as political careers of national politicians at the national level. Recruitment studies of national parliamentarians attempted to give us some insight into the social and political background of the national political elite (for comparative studies in this field see Norris 1997 and Best/Cotta 2000). While the local and regional level did feature in these studies as a recruitment pool for national politicians, they did so in a de-territorialized way, i.e. as specific functional levels of government rather than as particular territorial entities. Furthermore, the funnel perspective of recruitment studies automatically treated the national level as the only possible career aim of politicians. Neither did regional parliaments feature as a separate object of study, nor did these studies of national MPs look at the career paths of MPs after they left parliament (for a more elaborate critique of this approach see Stolz 2010a, Borchert/Stolz forthcoming). In the US, where there is a much older tradition on state legislative research, the two territorial levels are largely treated as completely separate, neglecting a systematic study of career paths that link these territorial levels.

A second reason for the neglect of the territorial dimension in career studies is simply that this methodological nationalism had its origin in the empirical reality of many western democracies. Indeed, in many countries the national level really has been the dominant focus of political careers. However, at least this second supposition is about to change. There are at least three different developments that have challenged the national level as the unquestioned apex of the political career ladder. First of all, in many western democracies regional politics has seen a tremendous process of political professionalisation during the end of the last century (most notably the US and Germany, see Gress/Huth 1998, Rosenthal 1998, 1999). This has rendered the regional level (and in some cases also the local level, see Reiser 2006) a much more attractive career arena. Secondly, many (formerly) unitary European states (such as Italy, France, Belgium, Spain, the UK etc.) have recently undergone quite significant processes of regionalization or even federalization (in the case of Belgium). The devolution of competencies and resources to the regions has also strengthened the regional level as a career arena. The third development is mainly restricted to Europe and has come from above: Europeanisation. With the establishment and continuous strengthening of the European Parliament (yet also the Commission) the national level has got another potential competitor to which career ambitions could, at least potentially, be directed.

More recent research has taken up these new developments often also explicitly rejecting the methodological nationalism of the past. A first snapshot study at career patterns across territorial levels in western democracies has revealed that political careers are not necessarily geared to the national level. Instead, career patterns across territorial "differ widely not only between countries, but also between regions within the same country" (Stolz 2003: 241). More elaborate and detailed studies have since followed looking at newly emerging multi-level career patterns in Europe (Edinger/Jahr

2010), in Latin America (Siavelis/Morgenstern 2008) and even across continents (Stolz/Borchert forthc.). In these studies, quite understandably, the focus is generally on parliamentary careers, as this constitutes the largest body of professional political careers. Parliamentary careers were taken as proxy for political careers in general. However, as the general thrust has now been established it is time for a closer look at these careers, identifying not only general career patterns across territorial levels, but also distinguishing between different positions and institutions.

In this paper we will thus take a closer look at patterns of ministerial careers across territorial levels in Germany. For reasons explained above, the scarce literature on ministerial careers in Germany has so far almost exclusively focused on linkages between parliamentary and ministerial careers on the federal level (Vogel 2009, Kaiser/Fischer 2009, Fischer/Kaiser 2010). Career movements between the regional and the national cabinet have hardly received any scholarly attention. Yet, general research on ministerial careers at least identified an increasing importance of state cabinets as recruitment pools for the federal cabinet (Fischer/Kaiser 2009: 29). Given the still more than modest state of research, our main aim in this paper is to detect and to describe the personal linkages between regional and national executives in Germany and to take first steps towards an explanation of these patterns. We do so by taking an institutional as well as a career perspective on the topic.

## 2. Theoretical Deliberations and Conceptual Framework

Patterns of political careers between the regional and the national level – no matter whether we investigate parliamentarians or government ministers – can generally take four distinct forms (cf. Stolz 2010b: 98-100). The first is the “*classical springboard*” pattern, where regional politicians move “up” to the national level (i.e. in a centripetal direction), but hardly any of them move “down” to the regional arena (i.e. in a centrifugal direction). This pattern suggests a clear hierarchy of preferences with the national centre widely accepted as the apex of political careers. This is basically the pattern to be found in the US. It has become something like the standard model in career studies (see above).<sup>1</sup>

#### FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE ####

A second pattern would consist of “*alternative careers*”, where regional politicians remain on the regional and national politicians remain on the national level. Such an overall pattern could be the result of a fairly equal evaluation of regional and national positions, where transaction costs restrict movement between arenas. However, such a pattern could also reflect the existence of two groups of politicians with opposing preferences, one with a clear regional orientation and the other with a national one, each

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<sup>1</sup> For some (Francis/Kenny 2000) this model even constitutes a general law of politics.

following their particular ambition. Finally, this pattern could also be the result of the existence of distinct party system at each level (e.g. Canada).

In a third scenario we may find frequent career movements between the two arenas in both directions. Such a pattern of “*integrated careers*” is the result of an integrated circuit of positions with no strong institutional boundaries and no clear-cut hierarchy between regional and national positions, which make up one single rather than two distinct career arenas. Such a pattern could be produced by politicians with no particular preference, moving between regional and national positions with no sense of territorial direction, or by politicians who are being moved by their political masters (usually in the party leadership) according to short term strategic deliberations. Alternatively, it could be the result of two distinct groups of politicians pursuing opposing career paths, whose movements (from regional to national positions on the one hand and from national to regional positions on the other) are cancelling each other out.

The final theoretical possibility is represented by the “*inverse springboard*” pattern, defined by frequent centrifugal career movements from the national to the regional arena and more or less no movement from the regional level “up” to the national centre. Such a pattern is only conceivable in the context of a complete reversal of the traditional hierarchy of offices. In such a scenario national positions might be regarded as an important asset or even a pre-requisite for politicians to take up higher office at the regional level.

Which of these ideal type patterns any particular empirical case resembles is dependent upon a number of variables. Central among them are certainly the state structure (federal vs. unitary, but also the kind of federalism or unitary state), the party system and the internal structure of political parties, the existence or absence of strong regional identities or even regionalist/nationalist movements and the degree of political professionalisation to be found on the regional level (relative to the national one) (for a more comprehensive list of potential variables see Stolz 2003: 241-6, Stolz 2010b: 49-53).

In the case of Germany, these variables do not clearly point to one of these types. The joint character of Germany’s federal system (as opposed to a more dual one), Germany’s relatively homogeneous and integrated party system (the extent of which is of course to be debated) and the lack of any strong regionalist movement all point towards a pattern where territorial levels are strongly linked via career movements rather than to an *alternative careers* pattern. The clear dominance of national politics over *Länder* affairs in the public discourse and the highly unequal distribution of resources and legislative competencies do further suggest a centripetal career orientation, thus pointing towards the *springboard* rather than the non-hierarchically *integrated* pattern. In the last decades, however, the rising political professionalisation of regional politics may have at least partly countered such a tendency elevating the regional arena to a career arena for professional politicians in its own right.

If we look at empirical studies of parliamentary careers, we find that the German case can generally be located somewhere between the traditional springboard and the alternative careers pattern. In fact, there seems to be a trend from the former to the

latter (Borchert/Stolz forthc. b), though where exactly Germany should be located at present is certainly disputable.

In the following we will be looking at the careers of regional and national cabinet members. On the whole, we would expect them to follow similar lines. However, there are also reasons, why they might deviate from the pattern of parliamentary careers. The main argument here is again related to the particular type of federalism at work in Germany. Germany is not only known to be an example of joint or cooperative federalism, its federal system is also seen to be executive dominated. While state legislators and legislatures do not have much policy autonomy and are rather weak political players, the strength of the Germany *Länder* is the role they can play in federal politics (in particular via the *Bundesrat*). This role, however, is reserved to the state government, rather than the parliament. Thus the strong integration of federal policy making, might be seen as something that is driving ambitious state legislators towards the national centre (*or* indeed the regional cabinet), while members of the regional executive are not necessarily exposed to the same centripetal current.

### 3. Data

In order to identify a pattern of ministerial careers across territorial levels in Germany we take a look at centripetal career movements, i.e. regional cabinet members moving into the federal executive but also at centrifugal movements, i.e. federal cabinet members moving into the regional executive. Both kinds of movements can be analysed from different perspectives. First, we can take the traditional recruitment perspective, that may also be termed *import perspective*. Here it is asked, how many members of a particular (importing) institution have had prior experience in a particular other institution. How many former *Land* ministers serve(d) in a particular federal government? How many former federal ministers are to be found in the average *Land* cabinet? This perspective has a strong institutional focus. Looking at the number of members with particular characteristics (a particular career background) relative to the overall size of the importing institution, the main interest is in the composition of an institution rather than in individual political careers.

A more career oriented perspective is taken, when we relate the number of career movements between two institutions to the size of the exporting rather than the importing institution. How many members of a regional cabinet have made it into the federal government? How many ministers of a particular federal cabinet have ended up in a regional government? The answer to these questions reflects the likelihood of a certain career movement and thus the frequency with which a particular career path is pursued. In our study we will explore ministerial careers in Germany from both perspectives.

Our data contains career information about all ministers and chancellors<sup>2</sup> who have been appointed to the federal cabinet since the first government of the Federal Republic in 1949 up to the changes made in the second Merkel cabinet until April 2010.<sup>3</sup> Our unit of observation varies according to what we want to investigate: We use either “persons” (N=203, each person is counted only once) or “cabinet ministers” (N=461, the cumulated number of ministerial offices in these cabinets, irrespective of the persons who hold these positions). Again, this distinction reflects the two perspectives explicated above. Exploring the career patterns of individual ministers on an aggregated level we are taking a career view, while focussing on cabinets ministerial positions allows us for example to give evidence about the recruitment power of the cabinets in the different *Länder* or about the share of *ex Land* ministers in each federal government.<sup>4</sup> Our data contains information whether a federal minister served in a state government before and/or after his tenure on the federal level. For those who were in cabinet at both levels since 1969, we additionally coded their portfolios.

As our data contains all federal ministers, by definition, it also contains all *Land* ministers who served at the federal level before or after their position in the *Land* cabinet. In the absence of a full dataset of all *Land* ministers which would allow us to calculate import and export ratios more comprehensively, we took three snapshots. They were taken in each of the sixteen states (respectively 11 before reunification) and cover all *Land* ministers who were in office in a government which was in power on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1960, 1991 and 2010. These snapshots comprise 469 regional cabinet members altogether.<sup>5</sup>

## 4. Findings

Our main findings in a nutshell: There is considerable movement of executive personnel between the *Land* and the federal governments. In the 61 years since the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany, 56 ministers have made such a move. We observe that the route from a *Land* to the federal cabinet is far more common than vice versa. We present this data in the next section and go into more detail, in the search for significant patterns. We mainly explore the centripetal and centrifugal moves to and from the federal level (Section 4.1 and 4.2), but additionally take a look at a selection of *Land* cabinets (Section 4.4).

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<sup>2</sup> For reasons of terminological simplicity we use the term “ministers” for the total of the executive personnel which encompasses ministers and chancellors.

<sup>3</sup> Our latest newcomer is Kristina Schröder (CDU), appointed to the Ministry of Family Affairs in November 2009.

<sup>4</sup> If we took only “persons” and not “cabinet ministers” as our unit of observation, we would not be able to differentiate between cabinets, as for example the cabinets Kohl I and II show. In both governments in each case four ministers had a *Länder* past, yet they were the same four persons. Hence, for an institutional perspective we need to count one person several times.

<sup>5</sup> The overall number of *Länder* ministers since 1946 can be estimated at about 2000. This number is calculated as follows: Based on 203 persons on the federal level in 61 years one can calculate an average of 3.3 newly appointed ministers per federal government year. In total, we have approximately 815 state government years. Given the smaller size of state cabinets and assuming on average a similar personnel stability as on the federal level, we calculate only 2.4 appointed ministers per year. This multiplied by 815 state government years equals 1956.

#### 4.1 Centripetal direction

Up to 2010 47 of all 203 federal ministers had been minister at a *Land* government before entering the federal cabinet. This constitutes a centripetal import ratio of 23 per cent. In other words: almost a fourth of all federal ministers had prior experience in the state government. This figure is considerably higher than the import ratios that has been generated by former *Land* parliamentarians in the German Bundestag in the last twenty years (this ratio has risen from 15 to 19 per cent between 1994 and 2009, Kintz 2010), though lower than this ratio had been in the 1960s (more than 25 per cent in 1965 according to Borchert/Golsch 1999: 129).

A comparison over time reveals a clear trend towards an increasing number of ministers with a *Land* past in the federal cabinet. This trend becomes especially evident since 1998: We show that from 1998 onwards the share of ministers with a state experience never dropped below 35 %, whereas between 1949 and 1998 it hardly ever exceeded 30 per cent (only two occasions: Adenauer I, 1949-1953 and Kiesinger I, 1966-1969). Also, of the 47 ministers who were in a *Land* executive 30 were appointed since Helmut Kohl's first chancellorship (64 per cent) in 1982 and 22 since the first cabinet of Gerhard Schröder in 1998. Yet, a look on the whole period reveals that this is not a linear pattern. Instead we have found considerable variance between individual cabinets : While some Chancellors had a cabinet composed of 50 per cent members with a *Land* government experience like Schröder I and Adenauer I<sup>6</sup>, in other cabinets as for example Schmidt I-III there was only one such person (in fact it was Helmut Schmidt himself with a *Land* executive past). At this stage of our research we are not yet able to explain the reasons for the large differences between governments. We suspect a combination of situational factors and the personal preferences of each chancellor to be of particular importance.

A second general pattern can be detected concerning the data within one chancellorship: The centripetal ratio is highest at the beginning of each chancellor's reign and then declines in the subsequent cabinets. One explanation for this phenomenon might be that a new chancellor seeks to compose a cabinet with practical government experience. Especially after a change in the governing parties the federal experience is hardly available so that chancellors revert to the *Land* level (as Gerhard Schröder in 1998). In subsequent cabinets then the executive experience at *Land* level can be replaced by the experience obtained in the past terms on the federal level.

#### Table 1 about here ####

Another potential explanation for the growing occurrence of level switchers is the need to compensate *Land* politicians who lost influence or even their job as a *Land* PM for reasons attributed to the poor performance of his party in the national government (Manow 2005: 259). Burkhart showed that the higher the decline in the federal government's popularity is, the higher are the losses of federal government parties in *Land* elections. Since reunification 1990 this negative influence of federal politics on *Land* election outcomes has even grown, rather than declined (Burkhart 2005). This

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<sup>6</sup> As this was the very first German post-war cabinet it is clearly a special case. In 1949, with no experienced federal legislators to pick from, *Länder* governments (in place since 1946) were an obvious recruitment pool.

explains a series of calls to cabinet especially during Gerhard Schröders administration. Reinhard Klimmt and Hans Eichel were 1999 voted out of there PM's office in Saarland respectively Hesse and joined the national cabinet shortly afterwards.

A look at the the career paths of the eight German chancellors shows that they are even more likely to have served in a *Land* cabinet before entering their federal office than their cabinet colleagues. Four of them, Kurt Georg Kiesinger, Willy Brandt, Helmut Kohl, and Gerhard Schröder, once were themselves *Ministerpräsident* of a *Land*; two served as ministers in *Land* executives (Helmut Schmidt and Ludwig Erhard) and only two came without any *Land* government experience (Konrad Adenauer and Angela Merkel). Our hunch that the chancellors' own career paths would have an influence on their appointment decisions in such a way that they selected those ministers who were career wise similar to themselves is not to be corroborated: Our figures do not show any correlation between the chancellors' career and their recruitment decisions.

While the centripetal import ratio of 23 per cent clearly reveals that *Land* governments are an important recruitment reservoir for federal ministers and that there is a considerable presence of *Land* experience in the federal government (institutional perspective), we should put things into perspective. First of all we have to acknowledge that former *Land* ministers are not the largest group in federal governments. Like in most other parliamentary systems it is the federal parliament that functions as the most important recruitment pool for the federal cabinet. In Germany no less than 64 per cent of the federal ministers held a seat in the Bundestag at the time of their first appointment to the national cabinet, an additional 7 per cent had held such a mandate at a former stage of their career (Fischer/Kaiser 2010: 38). However, the two recruitment pools are of course not mutually exclusive, some federal cabinet ministers might have held both positions in the course of their career.

A completely different picture appears, however, if we change perspective from the importing to the exporting institution. The 47 *Land* ministers that made the step into the federal cabinet can be seen as fairly large share (23 per cent) of all federal cabinet ministers, but this figure looks considerably less impressive if compared to the overall number of ministers who have served in a *Land* cabinet. Indeed, for ministers in a *Land* government the promotion to the federal level is a rare exception rather than the rule. Of the approximately 2000 *Land* ministers since 1946 only 47 have made such a career step.<sup>7</sup> For the remaining 97.6 per cent of all *Land* ministers this is the highest position they would get in politics.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The resulting centripetal export ratio of 2.4 per cent is even lower than what has been calculated for state legislators moving into the federal parliament (ca. 5 per cent, Stolz 2010b).

<sup>8</sup> The exceptions which confirm the rule are Michael Schreyer (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) and Günther Oettinger (CDU) who jumped from a *Land* government straight to the European Commission.

### 4.1.1 Portfolio

But what distinguishes those who do move up, from those who do not? Even though recent studies suggest that on the federal level there is a tendency to appoint generalists rather than experts (Fischer/Kaiser 2009: 31), we took a closer look at the portfolio of all *Land* ministers who have been recruited into federal government since 1969 (N = 33). Is there a connection between the policy fields the ministers have been in charge of at the *Land* and at the federal level? Do ministers who have been responsible for the intersection of *Land* and federal politics (usually the Ministry for Federal and European affairs) have any advantage? And finally, are political heavyweights (defined as prime ministers and finance ministers) more likely to be appointed. The result is that for 29 ministers (88 per cent) at least one of these features applies. 15 (45 per cent) were political heavy weights in the *Land* executive, 18 (55 per cent) were not. Ten (30 per cent) held a portfolio with a strong policy field connection to their subsequent office at federal level, two featured only partial policy connection between the portfolios and 21 had none at all. Only four ministers (12 per cent) held an intersectional function in the Ministry for Federal and European Affairs. These figures suggest that there is no clear portfolio wise pattern regarding the moves from the *Land* to the federal cabinet. Yet, being a political heavyweight in the *Land* executive can help on the way to the federal cabinet.

Despite the decreasing importance of expertise in a certain policy field, the portfolios held on the *Land* level may hint at the portfolio obtained by those promoted into the federal executive – yet, it is no decisive factor for a federal appointment. The same holds for the intersection portfolio at *Land* level: It might support a call to the federal cabinet, but it's not crucial.

### 4.1.2 Regional Origin

In this section we want to find out whether there are certain state executives with a special recruitment power.

##### Table 2 about here #####

We see that the absolute numbers are simply too small to draw general conclusions, but we do observe some differences between *Länder*. For obvious reasons, on the bottom of the list we find the five new East German *Länder*, which have not served as a potential recruitment pool before 1990.<sup>9</sup> For the rest we cannot find clear-cut patterns, but we observe that the large states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony each sent seven of their former cabinet members to the national cabinet. Nearly equally strong are the much smaller states of Berlin and Rhineland-Palatinate. Compared to its size, Berlin's executive personnel was over-represented on the national level. This might be for compensatory reasons because of the burdens and disadvantages resulting from its special geographic location surrounded by the GDR.

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<sup>9</sup> To be precise: A federal minister can also have a past in an Eastern German Cabinet from the years before the division of Germany (Hans Lukaschek).

What is striking is the small number of ministers recruited from the executive of powerful Bavaria: Only two. This could mean, that Bavarian politicians consider their own executive as attractive enough and that incentives for moving to the center are too low for a Bavarian politician. Also, we have to consider that the bavarian cabinet only functions as recruitment pool when the conservatives are in government at the federal level, as no social democrat has ever held bavarian executive office.

Being conscious about the limitations of a correlation with no more than sixteen cases, we ran a correlation of the numbers given in the “Persons” Column of Table 2 with the number of seats of each *Land* in the Bundesrat, the second chamber representing the *Länder*. Between three and six seats are assigned to each *Land*; we interpret this figure as a proxy of political power of a *Land*. The result: A significant positive correlation (0.569). It’s no news that regional representation according to the political power of a *Land*, respectively of the parties’ *Land* associations, is a selection criterion at the moment of composing a cabinet (Fischer/Kaiser 2009: 30). We show that this feature seems also to be valid for the sub group of ex *Land* cabinet members.

#### 4.2 Centrifugal direction

There is not only movement towards the center but also the other way round. From the perspective of the federal cabinet, nine of all the 203 federal ministers took up a post in a *Land* executive after their time in the central government, constituting a centrifugal export ratio of the federal cabinet of 4.4 per cent<sup>10</sup>.

#### Table 3 about here ####

We note that again this is not a very highly frequented career path. Yet, it is striking that those who opted for it without exception ended up in the Prime Minister’s seat on the *Land* level. Some were drawn directly from the federal cabinet to replace a resigning *Land* PM (Horst Seehofer [CSU] in 2008), others resigned after they themselves successfully had run for prime minister in a *Land* election (Walter Wallmann [CDU] in 1987), others took over the Prime Ministership not until several years after they were forced out of the federal office because of elections (Jürgen Rüttgers [CDU], prime minister since 2005).

A trend cannot be observed: No federal government contained more than two future *Land* PMs; the highest centrifugal export ratio is 11 per cent (Brandt II).

Turning to the regional destinations we find no obvious patterns: Bavaria and Schleswig-Holstein stand out with two ex federal ministers each as their Prime Minister, the rest has one or none.

The conclusion is that the centrifugal direction is seldom gone. But if members of the federal cabinet indeed choose (or are chosen) to continue their career on the *Land* level, a common ministerial seat does not suffice – it needs to be that of the prime minister.

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<sup>10</sup> Yet we have to take into account that for the recently departed and the current members of the federal cabinet it is still possible to start off a *Land* career.

### 4.3 Balance of movement – the integrated view

As expected for a traditionally federal country like Germany, career paths do cross the territorial levels of the political system and they do so pointing more often in a centripetal than in a centrifugal direction. With the balance of movement (at least in absolute terms) clearly tipped towards centripetal career paths (47 government members moved from *Land* to *Bund*, only nine from *Bund* to *Land*), ministerial careers in Germany closely resemble the *springboard pattern*. This pattern reflects a clear hierarchy between the two levels of government with the federal level clearly exceeding the regional in terms of status, power, income etc.

From an institutional perspective these absolute numbers translate into considerable import ratios for federal cabinets. On average 23 per cent of federal cabinet members do have prior experience in a *Land* cabinet. Federal cabinet experience in a *Land* executive, however, is rather rare. Our snapshots show import ratios of three per cent and below. Nevertheless, for those who did move from the federal cabinet into a *Land* executive, we can at least assume that they had a considerable influence on their cabinet, as all of them have moved into the office of prime-minister.

However, a look from a career point of view (i.e. an export perspective) may tell a more cautionary tale. Yes, a considerable share (23 per cent) of federal cabinet members has used a regional executive office as a springboard to federal government. In relation to the total number of approx. 2000 *Land* ministers, though, the number of 47 remains quite low (2.4 per cent centripetal export ratio). Indeed it is even lower than the share of ministers who moved from the federal to a state executive (4.4 per cent centrifugal export ratio). Thus, despite the centripetal direction of movements in absolute terms (constituting a “springboard pattern”) our analysis has also shown, that it is more likely for a federal minister to move towards the regional level, than it is for one of the many regional ministers to reach the federal government level.

### 4.4 The *Land* perspective

In this section we change perspectives: We do not look upon federal cabinets but upon *Land* cabinets. Still, we ask the same questions concerning the ministers' career: Did they serve in an executive office on the other, hence the federal level, before or after their tenure as a, in this case, *Land* minister? Data wise, this means that we change our reference figure and calculate the ratios of the respective *Land* cabinets, not of the federal cabinet as in chapter 3.2.

We took three snapshots, covering *Land* ministers who were in office in a government which was in power on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1960, 1991 and 2010. These snapshots were taken in each of the 16 states (respectively 11 before reunification) and resulted in a number of 469 ministers.

#### Table 4 about here ####

The absolute numbers of movements are too small to deduce general conclusions, but some results are still worth presenting: Our sample contains 469 *Land* ministers, but only four of them had been moving from the federal cabinet into the the *Land* government level (constituting a centrifugal import ratio of 0.9 per cent). Contrary to this, 14 of them chose to move the other direction from their position in the *Land* executive into the federal cabinet. Thus, the clear centripetal balance of absolute movements we have found overall, is also reflected in our snapshot.

Nevertheless, no *Land* has a centrifugal import ratio of more than 3 per cent. This means in absolute numbers: never more than one Minister with a *Bundes* past in *Land* cabinet. The federal cabinet is thus no important recruitment pool for Land government.

With regard to the figures for individual *Länder* it is striking that for all but one case, the balance of absolute movements is either even or tipped towards the federal level, suggesting that the springboard pattern detected on the aggregate level might be a fairly uniform model among individual *Länder*. The *Land* with the highest number of centripetal movements (4) and thus with the highest export ratio (11 per cent) is Lower Saxony. The only *Land* with a regionally oriented balance of movement is Bavaria. The Bavarian cabinets in our sample have attracted one former federal minister, while not one of its own cabinet members has stepped up the territorial ladder into federal government. It is questionable whether it makes sense to try to explain individual *Land* patterns based on such low absolute numbers. However, the fact that Bavaria is the odd one out, might have something to do with its special regional identity and/or the existence of a strong regionalist party in Bavaria, the CSU, operating on both, the *Land* and the federal level.

## 5. Conclusion

This study constitutes a first look at ministerial careers across territorial levels in Germany. The data presented seems to support some general notions of political careers in Germany as well as of German federalism. The most general result of this study, yet perhaps the least surprising, reads as follows: ministerial career movements between the state and the federal level do follow something like a springboard pattern. The pattern of movement shows a clear centripetal orientation of political careers reflecting the centripetal orientation of the German federal system in general.

Compared with centripetal parliamentary careers, the import ratio of former *Länder* ministers in the federal cabinet is higher, though their export ratio in relation to the overall pool of *Länder* ministers is lower than that of *Länder* parliamentarians moving into the federal parliament. The first comparison might be interpreted as suggesting that the regional cabinet experience is a more important asset in the competition for federal cabinet posts than a prior regional mandate is for the candidature and election to the federal parliament. The latter one might indeed reflect the relatively high attractiveness of *Länder* cabinet offices vis-à-vis the *Länder* parliamentary mandates in Germany's executive federalism (see chapter 2).

One of the more interesting findings regards the distribution of vastly different import ratios across individual federal cabinets. Here the much higher rates for the first cabinets

of a chancellor, especially if reaching his/her position after a period of opposition, reflects the training function of *Länder* cabinets. It is especially in the absence of potential candidates with ministerial experience on the federal level, that chancellors tend to look to the *Länder* executives as recruitment reservoirs.

Another argument with regard to the hierarchy between different territorial levels and different political offices can be made when looking at the few centrifugal career moves of federal cabinet ministers that did take place. The only position on the state level a (former) federal cabinet member is going to take up is that of prime-minister.

The rather low figures for individual *Länder* do not really allow for a more detailed analysis with regard to the regional distribution of centripetal and centrifugal career movements. In general though, the data does not violate the expectation that the *Länder* with more political weight will also send more of their cabinet members into the federal cabinet. One *Land* that might deserve a closer look is Bavaria, where there are more centrifugal than centripetal career moves.

As a first attempt to identify and explain ministerial careers across territorial levels this study is necessarily limited. Future research, we would suggest, should expand from here in at least three different directions. First of all, the nature and motive of career movement should be looked at in more detail. Explanations for general career patterns can only be given, once the causes for individual career moves are understood. In general we might distinguish three forms of career movements. Firstly, politicians might choose to give up one office completely voluntarily in order to take up the other. This type of movement can be found among others in the careers of Philipp Roesler (FDP), Ursula von der Leyen (CDU) and Karl-Heinz Funke (SPD), all of whom had been drawn directly from a current state cabinet post into the federal executive. A second type consists of indirect movement, where the movement into a new office has followed the involuntary loss (through deselection, dismissal, electoral defeat etc.) of the prior office or mandate. This type applies for example to Hans Eichel and Reinhard Klimmt, both once SPD Prime Minister in a *Land* and defeated in an election. Fate (rather than good timing) promptly offered them seats in the federal cabinet which just had become vacant after two ministerial resignations. A third type can be seen in career moves where the first office is given up voluntarily, yet this is not immediately followed by the other office. Joschka Fischer (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) took a double switch in 1994, leaving Hessian cabinet to lead his parliamentary party on federal level. In 1998 he entered the national government. In the first type we can expect that the career move is seen as a move up the career ladder, while in the second (and perhaps also in the third) we do not really know, whether the new office is not seen as second prize.

Apart from going into more detail we should also extend our perspectives beyond the study of pure parliamentary or pure ministerial careers. With regard to our interest in political careers across territorial levels, this would mean to also include state parliamentary mandate to federal cabinet office careers and, in turn, federal parliamentary mandate to state cabinet office careers into the analysis. One possible hypothesis would be, that level hoppers because of their political experience are generally more likely to be appointed into cabinet.

Finally all these results have to be set into a comparative context. In addition to taking a diachronic perspective, monitoring change over time, and to comparing legislative with ministerial careers we should also start to engage in serious cross-country and indeed cross-regional comparison. The specific features of political careers in Germany can only be appreciated, if they are contrasted to career patterns elsewhere. This CPISA conference panel might be a good starting point.

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## Figures and Tables

**Figure 1: Career patterns in multi-level systems**

	High Centripetal Movement	Low Centripetal Movement
Low Centrifugal Movement	<b>Classical Springboard</b>	<b>Alternative Careers</b>
High Centrifugal Movement	<b>Integrated Careers</b>	<b>Inverse Springboard</b>

<b>Table 1: Centripetal Moves</b>			
Government	Federal Cabinet Members	Regional Cabinet before Federal Cabinet	Centripetal Ratio
Adenauer I (1949-1953)	16	8	50,00%
Adenauer II (1953-1957)	24	7	29,17%
Adenauer III (1957-1961)	20	4	20,00%
Adenauer IV (1961-1962)	21	2	9,52%
Adenauer V (1962-1963)	22	3	13,64%
Erhard I (1963-1965)	24	3	12,50%
Erhard II (1965-1966)	22	3	13,64%
Kiesinger I (1966-1969)	25	8	32,00%
Brandt I (1969-1972)	17	5	29,41%
Brandt II (1972-1974)	18	3	16,67%
Schmidt I (1974-1976)	17	1	5,88%
Schmidt II (1976-1980)	22	1	4,55%
Schmidt III (1980-1982)	21	1	4,76%
Kohl I (1982-1983)	17	4	23,53%
Kohl II (1983-1987)	21	4	19,05%
Kohl III (1987-1991)	31	5	16,13%
Kohl IV (1991-1994)	31	6	19,35%
Kohl V (1994-1998)	20	5	25,00%
Schröder I (1998-2002)	22	11	50,00%
Schröder II (2002-2005)	14	6	42,86%
Merkel I (2005-2009)	19	9	47,37%
Merkel II (2009- )	17	6	35,29%
Total Cabinet Ministers	461	105	22,78%
Total Persons	203	47	23,15%

	Cabinet Ministers   of that PMs		Persons   of that PMs	
Baden-Württemberg	5	1	4	1
Bavaria	10	3	2	1
Berlin	14	3	6	1
Brandenburg	1	1	1	1
Bremen	0	0	0	0
Hamburg	8	0	3	0
Hesse	11	2	5	1
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	0	0	0	0
Lower Saxony	16	3	7	2
North Rhine-Westphalia	11	2	7	2
Rhineland-Palatinate	14	6	6	2
Saarland	2	2	2	2
Saxony	2	0	1	0
Saxony-Anhalt	0	0	0	0
Schleswig-Holstein	10	8	4	2
Thuringia	1	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>15</b>

<b>Table 3: Centrifugal Moves</b>			
Government	Federal Cabinet Members	Regional Cabinet after Federal Cabinet	Centrifugal Ratio
Adenauer I (1949-1953)	16	1	6,25%
Adenauer II (1953-1957)	24	2	8,33%
Adenauer III (1957-1961)	20	1	5,00%
Adenauer IV (1961-1962)	21	1	4,76%
Adenauer V (1962-1963)	22	1	4,55%
Erhard I (1963-1965)	24	0	0,00%
Erhard II (1965-1966)	22	1	4,55%
Kiesinger I (1966-1969)	25	2	8,00%
Brandt I (1969-1972)	17	1	5,88%
Brandt II (1972-1974)	18	2	11,11%
Schmidt I (1974-1976)	17	1	5,88%
Schmidt II (1976-1980)	22	1	4,55%
Schmidt III (1980-1982)	21	2	9,52%
Kohl I (1982-1983)	17	0	0,00%
Kohl II (1983-1987)	21	1	4,76%
Kohl III (1987-1991)	31	1	3,23%
Kohl IV (1991-1994)	31	0	0,00%
Kohl V (1994-1998)	20	2	10,00%
Schröder I (1998-2002)	22	0	0,00%
Schröder II (2002-2005)	14	0	0,00%
Merkel I (2005-2009)	19	1	5,26%
Merkel II (2009- )	17	0	0,00%
Total Cabinet Ministers	461	21	4,56%
Total Persons	203	9	4,43%

<b>Table 4 - The regional level</b>					
Land	Land Cabinet Members	Federal Cabinet before Regional Cabinet	Import Ratio	Federal Cabinet after Regional Cabinet	Export Ratio
Baden-Württemberg	34	0	0,00%	1	2,94%
Bavaria	32	1	3,13%	0	0,00%
Berlin	43	0	0,00%	2	4,65%
Brandenburg	22	0	0,00%	1	4,55%
Bremen	32	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
Hamburg	33	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
Hesse	29	1	3,45%	1	3,45%
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	18	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
Lower Saxony	35	0	0,00%	4	11,43%
North Rhine-Westphalia	39	1	2,56%	2	5,13%
Rhineland-Palatinate	29	0	0,00%	1	3,45%
Saarland	27	0	0,00%	1	3,70%
Saxony	23	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
Saxony-Anhalt	22	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
Schleswig-Holstein	29	1	3,45%	1	3,45%
Thuringia	22	0	0,00%	0	0,00%
Total	469	4	0,85%	14	2,99%
Total 1960	113	0	0,00%	4	3,54%
Total 1991	185	2	1,08%	9	4,86%
Total 2010	171	2	1,17%	1	0,58%